

**Conference on Effectively Restoring Ecosystems
22-24 August 2000, St. Louis, Missouri**

BACKGROUND

Session: Plenary 6

Topic: Watershed Efforts with the Environmental Protection Agency

Moderator: Erika Hieber, IWR

Recorder: Joy Muncy, IWR

Panelists:

- Phil Oshida, USEPA, HQ
- Jack Generaux, USEPA Region VII
- Susan Branning, USEPA Region VI

Objective: To explore and examine watershed partnering opportunities among Corps planning efforts and Environmental Protection Agency funded programs and activities.

Description: Panelists gave presentations which included the Clean Water Act, Watershed Management Model, and a look at two projects (Trinity River, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas and Middle Brazos, Near Waco, Texas).

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Jack Generaux conducted a presentation on the Clean Water Act. This included a discussion of the goals and the key elements of the Clean Water Act, as well as monitoring, the Section 303(d) Threatened and Impaired Waters List, and the Section 305 (b) National Water Quality Inventory. Mr. Generaux had a detailed presentation on Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) in regards to Water Quality Standards. A description of section 319 – Nonpoint Source program, examples of Best Management Practices, and an explanation of “State” Revolving Loan Funds were also presented. The Corps, as with other agencies, partners in seeing that the Clean Water Action Plan meets its objectives.

Mr. Phil Oshida presented what it takes to build a Watershed Management Model. These steps include: 1) building partnerships, 2) identifying and assessing watershed issues, 3) developing a watershed management plan, 4) implementing the plan, and 5) evaluating the performance of the plan. Within the topic of building partnerships, Mr. Oshida explained that there are many opportunities for Corps assistance. He also mentioned that agency partnerships deal just as much with building cooperation and understanding among individuals as it focuses on collaboration among the agencies’ programs. Partnerships are more efficient use of financial resources and they are more creative and have acceptable ways to protect and restore natural resources. The challenges between the Corps and EPA are to: 1) Increase flexibility, 2) change habits and behaviors (attitudes), 3) expand range of goals, and 4) expand range of options. An important point made was to try to “Leave Your Ego at the Door” in order to facilitate the forward movement of partnering attempts.

Ms. Susan Branning discussed two watershed-like projects from her region in which EPA is working with the Corps as well as other Federal, state, and local groups.

The first being a watershed project in the Trinity River system, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas and the second is the Middle Brazos, located near Waco, Texas.

The issues being investigated in the Trinity River study involve flooding, environmental degradation, water quality issues, and outdoor recreation. The EPA has been scoping and coordinating with numerous Federal, State and Local agencies. Ms. Branning commented that working with the Corps on this effort has been a positive experience. The Final Programmatic EIS was completed in June 2000. The other project Ms. Branning discussed was the Middle Brazos located in central Texas near Waco. This area is the highest concentration of animal feedings – in other words – Lots of Cows! This project involves environmental degradation and water quality issues. There are 44 counties in central Texas. EPA is working with State and River Authorities, as well as the USDA and the Corps.

Based on Ms. Branning's experience on these two studies, as well as drawing on her other watershed study experiences, she presented EPA related topics/areas that would likely facilitate more holistic planning when planning Corps studies. The areas for any project coordination to consider are to: 1) EPA and State water quality problems and goals in proposed project areas; 2) relevant sites and locations on the 303(d) list (which was discussed in Mr. Generaux's presentation); 3) hydrology and habitat issues within the watershed; and 4) information sharing with local EPA counterparts in an effort to help clarify (describe) the peculiarities of the Corps structure and budget/schedule issues.